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BOOK REVIEWS.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SOCIETY. By Albion W. Small, Ph. D., and George E. Vincent (University of Chicago). New York: American Book Company, 1894. Pp. 374.

This book modestly disclaims being a contribution to "sociological knowledge," and comes as a proffered help in the training of beginners. It proposes simply a "method of preliminary investigation adaptable to the use of college students." What is meant by sociological knowledge or sociology? The words are often used at the present time, and it is highly desirable to have clear ideas as to what is covered by them. What is it we are to investigate?

The authors start out by telling us that sociology is "the systematic knowledge of human beings," which is not exactly reassuring, as psychology or, at any rate, anthropology might be spoken of in much the same way. But they immediately pass on to say that "the facts of *associated** human life" are its proper territory, and a little later they identify it with "precise examination of social facts." It is true that they sometimes appear to put it on a par with "social theories" or "systems of social doctrine," and once roundly call it "the philosophy of human welfare," but this is because they have in mind a larger use of "sociology," according to which it is practically coincident with "social philosophy." Under the latter head are included three divisions: (1) the scientific exhibition of social facts, (2) the science of the ideals "which the facts implicitly contain," (3) the investigation of the means and available resources for changing the actual into the ideal. The first is called Descriptive Sociology, the second Statical Sociology, the third Dynamic Sociology. And plainly, if we know what society is, what it ought to be, and how it may become what it ought to be, we have what we may properly call social philosophy.

The authors limit themselves to the first division, referring only incidentally to the others. They do not even deal in full with Descriptive Sociology, but only with *contemporary* Descriptive Sociology,—*i.e.*, attempt an analysis of contemporary society not

* The italics throughout this notice are the reviewer's.

in its origins, but as it is now found in the more advanced civilization of Europe and America. It must be admitted that it appears to be somewhat difficult for them to keep to the objective and analytical point of view. We are privileged to have their "views" on a variety of topics. They make use of the familiar bogey of the French Revolution, identifying its spirit with destructive dogmas and enjoining the teacher of sociology to make his influence felt "against every destructive tendency." They run a tilt against "those zealous prophets of righteousness who teach that the only reason why the kingdom of God cannot be established on earth to-morrow is that Christians will not put their knowledge of social principles into practice," though they appear to be themselves followers of him who came fervently prophesying, "The kingdom of heaven is *at hand*." They venture to speak of idleness as a "pathological condition," and yet add, "In the case of all idleness, *especially that of the rich*, hasty judgments should be carefully avoided." They speak rather harshly of "hazards dignified in conventional phrases as commercial speculations," but hasten to reassure us by saying, "Wholesale denunciation of stock and produce exchanges will be avoided by the careful observer of society." They tell us that "from the sociological stand-point" the "demands of the laborer have been too exclusively in terms of wages and too little in terms of manhood," a contrast which sounds *imponirend*, though its force is somewhat abated by another statement that it is nothing less than "quackery to conceal the fundamental necessity and the universal utility of wealth."^{*} We even hear that "in contrast with the eagerness of socialism, the policy of sociology is to make haste slowly," as if sociology were to be identified with a special sort of social programme.[†] But

* The authors finely say, "The world will not be right until every adult man's labor can command, for himself and for the family that should be a part of himself, access to everything essentially human." Again, "Civilization is a miserably crude experiment until it is possible for each member of society to command food and clothing and shelter and surplus and leisure enough to permit progressive and all-sided expansion of manhood." They add, "The struggle for this consummation is not a class contest, however. It is a common interest of all sections of society." This is true in an ideal sense, but the authors would probably admit equally that, because it is not an *actual* common interest of all sections of society, it remains for the time necessarily "a class contest."

† The same idea appears in another statement: "In the Hegelian idiom, conventionality is the thesis, socialism is the antithesis, sociology is the synthesis." But socialism is really one possible way of formulating the social ideal and one

this is perhaps all explicable, partly in view of the fact that the authors, despite their somewhat severe reminder that the "primary task is not to reform society, but to understand society," cannot quite keep out of mind the larger aspects, the ultimately practical purport, of their science, and partly since in launching a new department, which is popularly supposed to have something to do with "social questions," in a university situated in the midst of the trying atmosphere of Chicago and supported by its sensitive wealth, they have encountered peculiar difficulties and have been somewhat exercised in their minds.

The description and analysis of social phenomena that make up the greater part of the book are not altogether satisfactory,—not from anything that is said, but from what we may call a lack of clearness in the point of view. "Society" may be taken as a synonym for the human race in general or some portion of it (*e.g.*, the Western peoples), or as an abstract word, the actual meaning of which is *societies*,—various particular kinds of human association. Sometimes the word appears to be used in the former sense, as when it is said "we are attempting an analysis of contemporary society, as it is found in the more advanced civilization of Europe and America;" and sometimes in the latter sense, though the only kind of society that is specially considered (aside from the vague *ensemble* just mentioned) is the family. We may possibly make our meaning clearer if we ask, Is the "contemporary society" of which the authors speak really a society? Can France and Germany properly be spoken of as a society? They belong to society in the vague sense, it is true, but can they be said to make, or compose, *a society*? Can those who are warring against one another (or are ready to) make up a real social whole?

Now, analysis of "contemporary society" in general is a task of bewildering complexity, and we cannot say that we have found any special enlightenment on this vast subject in the two hundred and seventy-five pages which our authors have given us. And as to study of societies in the concrete, of the various forms of association, of the principles underlying them, of the conditions and forces which call them into existence, we find very little of it.

possible method of accomplishing it. Sociology, then, in its "statical" and "dynamic" phases, has to consider it; but sociology cannot by any possibility be contrasted with it any more than political economy can be contrasted with the theories of free trade or protection.

What we find under the attractive title of "The Natural History of a Society" is a highly interesting narrative of the growth of a city in the western part of America from the time of the arrival of the first "prairie schooner." But this, as Professor H. H. Powers has already observed, is hardly more than a study in colonization, and simply shows how people fitted (and unfitted) for social life in one place found themselves similarly fitted (or unfitted) in another. It is excellent history, but strikes us as only in a very loose, or at least secondary, sense, sociology. Sociology should tell us what makes societies in the first place. We must do the authors the justice to say that they do not assume to more than describe the present (p. 183); but how can we perform the difficult task of *understanding* society, which they equally urge upon us (p. 19), if we do not know something of its antecedents and of the forces that have made it what it is?

Books III. to V., entitled "Social Anatomy," "Social Physiology and Pathology," and "Social Psychology," elaborate in a not extravagant way the analogy between society and an organism. The authors accept the principles of the system of Schaeffle, and state it as the aim of their manual "to place students in possession of the organic hypotheses of society, as a working-tool and a useful instrument." But surely to work out an analogy, however conscientiously, and to give us new designations for old facts, is not to lay the foundations of a new science.

WILLIAM M. SALTER.

PHILADELPHIA.

IDEALS AND INSTITUTIONS: THEIR PARALLEL DEVELOPMENT. A Thesis presented at the University of Minnesota for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. By John Ernest Merrill, B.A. Hartford, Conn.: Hartford Seminary Press, 1894. Pp. 175.

This thesis is divided into two parts,—the first of which is "metaphysical" or theoretical, and the second, historical. Though these parts are closely related to one another, the second giving the historical verification of the position established theoretically in the first, the first part alone falls within the proper province of this JOURNAL, and fairly within the knowledge of the present reviewer. The "thesis," completely stated, is that "History shows a parallel development of institutions and the moral ideal. In this development, the ideal has been prior to and causally connected with its